(c) There are twenty two mutually agreed Land Customs Stations along the India-Nepal border with provision for customs check-posts. Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has four hundred and forty six Border Out Posts on the India-Nepal border. There are five posts along the border where immigration is done in respect of third country nationals.

(d) No.

(e) No.

(f) and (g) Do not arise.

Delay in issuing of Passport

†618. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been brought to the notice of Government that due to delay in issuing of passport in definite period, less number of passports are being issued;

(b) whether new rules are being framed in consultation with Ministry of Home Affairs in this regard; and

(c) if so, the main features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SHASHI THAROOR): (a) Ministry is aware that in a few Passport Offices there is delay in issuing passports and remedial measures are being taken so that delays are avoided.

(b) and (c) Yes. The Government had entrusted the National Institute of Smart Government (NISG), Hyderabad, with the task of undertaking a time-bound study on the passport issuance system, including its IT aspects, with the objective of delivering passport-related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible and reliable manner. The Government accepted the NISG report as a result of which the "Passport Seva Project" has been launched. The proposal is to have 77 Passport Seva Kendras all over the country where the non-sovereign functions involved in the passport issuance process, such as the initial scrutiny of the application forms, acceptance of fee, scanning of the documents, taking photos etc, will be performed by the selected Service Provider. The sensitive activities, such as police verification, printing and dispatch of passports, will be performed by Government staff. The project is expected to result in the issue of passports within three days, and where police verification is required, within three days after completion of the verification process. The Project is expected to be implemented fully to cover the entire country by the middle of 2010.

Agreement to fight Terrorism

619. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether treaties/agreements have been made with various countries for mutual cooperation in combating the growing menace of terrorism;

(b) if so, the details thereof specifying areas of joint-working, if any, envisaged in such agreements with respective countries;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether recently representatives of India and the USA to the eleventh meeting of the US-India Counter Terrorism Joint Working Group in Washington DC, have envisged steps to be taken jointly;

(d) if so, the salient details thereof; and

(e) the details about the origin of this joint working group along with summary of resolutions, if any, it made in the last ten meetings?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) As part of our efforts to combat the menace of terrorism, Joint Work Gropus (JWGs) on Counter-Terrorism have been established with 27 countries or regional organizations as per the details given in the Statement. (*See* below). The JWGs provide a forum for counte cooperation through sharing information and assessments regarding global terrorism training and capacity building, promoting cooperation in counter-terrorism related technologies and equipment, and the strengthening of multilateral efforts in the area of counter-terrorism.

(c) and (d) The 11th meeting of the India-US JWG on Counter-Terrorism was held in Washington on 17th June 2009. It focused on assessing global terrorist threats, combating terrorism through technological advancement and enhancing bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation. Both countries discussed methods to counter the flow of funds to terrorists and money laundering, means to strengthen border and critical infrastructure security, capacity building and expanded information sharing.

(e) The decision to establish the India-USA JWG on Counter-Terrorism was announced in January 2000. The first meeting of the JWG took place on 7th-8th February 2000 in Washington D.C. The JWG has served as a useful platform for cooperation in counter in counter-terrorism through sharing mutual threat perceptions, assessing the regional security situation, coordinating approaches and action, and addressing common concerns such as drug-trafficking, financing of terrorism, bio-terrorism, aviation security, cyber security, law enforcement and extradition.

Statement

List of Joint Working Groups on Counter Terrorism

S. No	Name of Country	Year of setting up
1	2	3
I.	Egypt	1995
2.	Canada	1997
3.	Germany	1998
4.	U. K.	2000
5.	USA	2000
6.	France	2001
7.	E.U*	2001
8.	China	2002

1	2	3
9.	Israel	2002
10.	Kazakhstan	2002
11.	Russia	2002
12.	Croatia	2002
13.	Uzbekistan	2003
14.	Thailand	2003
15.	Turkey	2003
16.	Singapore	2003
17.	Australia	2003
18.	Tajikistan	2003
19.	BIMSTEC*	2004
20.	Mauritius	2004
21.	Indonesia	2004
22.	Myanmar	2004
23.	Poland	2004
24.	Japan	2005
25.	Cambodia	2005
26.	Pakistan	2006
27.	Italy	2007

*Regional Groups

Signing of nuke ban treaty

620. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in a policy shift, the US reportedly wants India to sign nuke ban treaty;

(b) if so, whether Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) would not involve any implications for the Indo-US Nuclear Deal already signed between the two countries;

(c) the countries who have ratified/signed the treaty adopted by the UN in 1996 and the countries who have not yet signed; and

(d) the policy of present new Government in connection with signing of CTBT?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) The United States has not requested India to sign the CTBT in recent bilateral discussions.